

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 03159 201031Z

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ACTION PPT-01

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SCA-01 AID-05 /018 W

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P 201011Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7767

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DAMASCUS 3159

FROM AMBASSADOR MURPHY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CPAS, APER, EAID, PFOR, US, SY

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS FOR USAID PERSONNEL

REF: (A) STATE 117686, (B) DAMASCUS 2765, (C) DAMASCUS 897

(D) 75 STATE 152729, (E) 75 DAMASCUS 2059

1. I FAIL TO UNDERSTAND CONTINUED DELAY IN ISSUANCE OF DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS TO USAID PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO SYRIA. THIS MATTER WAS THOROUGHLY REVIEWED ALMOST ONE YEAR AGO AND AT THAT TIME DEPT ADVISED THAT "USAID PERSONNEL NOW AT POST OR ASSIGNED TO DAMASCUS, IF THEY ARE NOT ALREADY BEARERS OF DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS, SHOULD PROCEED TO APPLY FOR THEM IMMEDIATELY. SCA HAS UNDERTAKEN TO ISSUE DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS TO ALL USAID PERSONNEL OF OFFICER RANK UPON RECEIPT OF THEIR APPLICATIONS (REF D, PARA 2)."

2. IN MY JUDGMENT, POSSESSION OF DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS IS ESSENTIAL FOR PROTECTION AND SAFETY OF USAID PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO SYRIA UNTIL SUCH TIME AS AID BILATERAL AGREEMENT CONTAINING SATISFACTORY GUARANTEES AND IMMUNITIES IS NEGOTIATED. THIS AGREEMENT IS NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION BY SARG, BUT WE ESTIMATE THAT PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS OR MORE WILL BE REQUIRED BEFORE AGREEMENT IS FULLY NEGOTIATED, SIGNED, RATIFIED AND PUT INTO EFFECT. IN MEANTIME, USAID PERSONNEL MUST CARRY OUT THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN SYRIA, INCLUDING NECESSITY

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OF TRAVELING TO REMOTE AREAS OF COUNTRY, WITHOUT PRO-

TECTION WHICH BILATERAL AGREEMENT WILL LATER AFFORD.
GIVEN UNSETTLED CLIMATE IN AREA AND HOSTILITY WITH
WHICH MANY SYRIANS REGARD U.S., I BELIEVE THAT POSSESSION
OF DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS WILL PROVIDE IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL
INCREMENT OF PROTECTION TO USAID PERSONNEL, PARTICULARLY
OUTSIDE CAPITAL CITY OF DAMASCUS.

3. I THEREFORE REQUEST THAT PENDING APPLICATIONS OF
USAID PERSONNEL (REF B) BE APPROVED AND DIPLOMATIC PASS-
PORTS ISSUED WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 MAY 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: vogelfj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976DAMASC03159
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760195-0703
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760534/aaaabcon.tel
Line Count: 72
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION PPT
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 117686, 76 DAMASCUS 2765, 76 DAMASCUS 897
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: vogelfj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUN 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <21 OCT 2004 by vogelfj>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REQUEST FOR DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS FOR USAID PERSONNEL
TAGS: CPAS, APER, EAID, PFOR, US, SY, AID
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006